

Editorials

Lysergic Acid Diethylamide

Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25) was introduced as a psychomimetic drug and became a powerful investigative tool. Significant research was conducted on animals and later on humans. However, the comparison of the psychological and physiological effects of LSD-25 with those of schizophrenia could not be validated after careful study, and the concept of a "model psychosis" was found to be weak.

LSD-25 then was used as an adjunct to psychotherapy, presumably loosening defenses and facilitating "insight." The affective release interested many psychiatrists who administered the drug to themselves, and some, who became enamored with the mystical hallucinatory state, eventually in their "mystique" became disqualified as competent investigators. Lay people "bootlegged" the drug for its pleasurable effect, and a few writers published stories and books on the subject for the lay public. Motion picture actors extolled its benefits, and television psychiatrists enacted its curative powers.

Now the deleterious effects are becoming more obvious. Latent psychotics are disintegrating under the influence of even single doses; long-continued LSD experiences are subtly creating a psychopathology. Psychic addiction is being developed, and the lay public is looking for psychiatrists who specialize in its administration.

Here again is the story of evil results from the ill-advised use of a potentially valuable drug, due to unjustified claims, indiscriminate and premature publicity, and lack of proper professional controls. Indeed this editorial is a warning to the psychiatric profession that greater morbidity, and even mortality, is in store for its patients unless controls are developed against the unwise use of LSD-25.

ROY R. GRINKER, SR., MD